

ACADEMIC STANDARDS COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

September 16, 2014

Video Conference between:

Department of Education
9890 South Maryland Pkwy
Las Vegas, Nevada 89183
Board Room

Department of Education
700 East Fifth Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701
Board Room

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Amy Carvalho, Chair
Evelyn Allred
Sharon Beatty
Assemblyman David Bobzien
Steve Laden
Gary Shen, M.D.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Aaron Ford

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Steve Canavero, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement
Cynthia Sharp, Director, Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum (APAC)
Dave Brancamp, Assistant Director, APAC
Andre DeLeon, EPP, K-12 Health, Science, and World Language, APAC
Laurie Thake, Administrative Assistant

LEGAL COUNSEL

Greg Ott, Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

Carson City:
Vanessa Spinazola, ACLU of Nevada

Las Vegas:
No members of the public in attendance.

Call to Order; Roll Call; Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Carvalho called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. with the attendance reflected above. It was determined a quorum was present.

Chair Carvalho led the pledge of allegiance.

Public Comment #1

Carson City:

No public comment.

Las Vegas:

No public comment.

Approval of a Flexible Agenda

MOTION: Member Allred moved to approve a flexible agenda. Member Laden seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The Council discussed Agenda item #7, Administration of criterion-referenced examinations for the 2014-2015 school-year, before item #5, Deputy Superintendent's Update on Department Activities.

Approval of the Academic Standards Council Meeting Minutes from May 6, 2014

MOTION: Member Beatty moved to approve the minutes from the May 6, 2014 Academic Standards Council meeting as written. Member Laden seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Administration of criterion-referenced examinations for the 2014-2015 school year

http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/Item_6-7_-_Standards_Council_Slides_-_Cindy_Sharp/

Director Sharp and Assistant Director Brancamp discussed the existing Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) and the transition to the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) for grades 3-8 for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and writing for grades 5 and 8.

Director Sharp stated the CRT is a paper and pencil test which is approximately 30% aligned to our new standards, while the SBAC is a computer-adaptive test and 100% aligned to the new standards. The SBAC also allows for some out-of-grade level testing which provides a better student progression profile. CRTs are entirely on-grade-level. Educators were involved in the development of both assessments.

The SBAC assessment shows math skills as well as technology enhanced items. In the math assessment, students will have the ability to move numbers and engage with item itself. In ELA, we will be able to obtain a higher degree of complexity than we have been able to obtain thus far. Overall, the assessment is more language rich and more equivalent to grade level expectations.

Director Sharp stated the cost of the summative assessment for both the CRT and the SBAC was \$22.50 per student. For clarification, she stated a summative assessment was taken at the end of a period of time and was an overall look at what a student learned over that period. Eventually we would like to have a formative assessment to see where students start, an interim assessment to see how they are progressing, and then a summative assessment to see how they did at the end of an instructional period.

Assemblyman Bobzien questioned whether the Professional Development (PD) provided to classroom teachers supported their ability to fully incorporate the standards that would provide the informational feedback needed. Director Sharp stated, from the teachers perspective, the standards were adopted in 2010 and the NDE has been collecting data to determine where teachers and districts are in terms of implementing standards. We believe all teachers are aware of the standards and they have had some PD in terms of the standards, but how comfortable they are with the standards is hard to tell. There are practice changes as well as standard changes, so it is a long change.

Members expressed concern over the computer skills needed for this type of testing and whether our students had the necessary computer skill to do well. Director Sharp stated the SBAC website contained practice tests, types of items, and all the accommodations available as part of the test. Interested individuals can access the practice test and use accommodations and the technology enhanced pieces. SBAC also has a new email address, so you can email questions or concerns and get an answer quickly. Relative to the field test itself, Director Sharp stated the test was designed to look at items in terms of statistical soundness. In particular, the test was designed to identify red flags which indicated bias between students. No state received specific information on how their students did academically because the purpose of the test was to establish sound questions. The field test was engineered to spot, reduce, and remove bias.

Chair Carvalho requested additional information relative to member concerns about how to prepare students to take a computer test. Director Sharp indicated the SBAC website had a test administration section with practice components. Students do not have the reservations about computer testing that adults seem to have. Students want the computer. Some test fatigue did occur, so breaks were incorporated. Our students established they are ready for computer testing.

We worked with our contractor, Measured Progress (MP), to develop an assessment readiness team to determine what pieces were missing, what districts needed, and how to we bring schools up to speed to meet those needs. We are also working with outside organizations to determine how to best work with schools without the current capacity for online testing. Nevada had very few technology problems and had no problems engaging students. MP will start technology seminars for district IT directors and site administrators in December 2014 and January 2015. In February and March 2015, we will have a statewide practice run with IT directors to make sure both the sign-on and accommodation functions are working. During April and May 2015 SBAC will be administered.

Relative to school-level capacity, Deputy Canavero added that a school without sufficient network or broadband capacity for online testing will be offered a paper and pencil version of the test. We currently have that option for 3 years; however, if that is not enough time to solve capacity issues, as a governing state in SBAC, we have a voice on this issue. The field test was our only true capacity test and we have some schools which may have very specific access problems.

Deputy Canavero confirmed the current budget will only support the basic system for 2014-2015 and noted the Council's desire to let districts elect to use other iterative and formative tools. Member Allred recommended the first year of SBAC basic be used as a transition year, but not used for the star rating. Deputy Canavero noted that this accountability component will be discussed during the waiver renewal process. The current ESEA waiver was extended to this year without changes. We will begin discussion at SBE meeting in regard to the waiver re-write and what that means in terms of the star ratings.

Regarding data security, Deputy Canavero stated the NDE receives a lot of questions and concerns about data privacy; rightfully so. The contract we have negotiated, and will now sign, allows no personally identifiable information on students to go to SBAC. That information has to go to MP and they have been a great partner to our state and a good steward of information for our students. It is in the contract and in the data share agreement.

Members discussed the cost associated with aligning assessments to the Nevada Academic Content Standards and queried whether the whole cost was compared. Members also questioned whether an online assessment would get test results and feedback to schools sooner. Deputy Canavero stated NDE staff invested a great deal of time to associate costs with assessments to create an equitable comparison. He also added that districts were looking for a completely aligned assessment for accountability purposes. We need to consider that if we remain with the existing CRT, a significant investment will need to be made to move standards alignment from 30-100 percent. The basic system with SBAC is actually less expensive because we will need to bring CRT up to speed with current standards. MP costs for both are very similar.

The NDE has been working on turn over time for test results. Unfortunately, many think that because it is a computer based assessment, they can get results as soon as the students complete the exam; it is not quite that easy. A large portion of the assessment will still need to be hand scored, so the results will not be available as soon or as quick as some would like. Director Sharp added that the test result would be available in approximately the same timeframe as the current CRTs. The turnaround with MP is really very quick, although it may not always seem that way.

Assemblyman Bobzien thanked Deputy Canavero for an explanation of the privacy issues and stated it was an obvious choice to move to a test system with better alignment with the standards. He stated that he disliked idea that there was an option off the table because of cost, but was not as concerned about it for this timeframe because of the wisdom of going with the bridge option, and then building upon that for SBAC complete in the future. With the cost of SBAC complete as a concern, we need to have some discussion as to when to move forward. Member Beatty concurred and stated she would prefer to go forward with a complete system right away, but understood the fiscal constraints. She also stated that the public needs to know we are making progress in the ability to track a students' develop during the year.

MOTION: Assemblyman Bobzien moved to recommend that the State Board of Education (SBE) prescribe the administration of the Smarter Balanced Criterion Referenced Tests in English and mathematics (grades 3-8) and writing (grades 5 and 8).

Package:

- Basic System for 2014-2015.
- Pursue all options to fund the Complete System in 2015-2016 and beyond.
- Timeframe: 3 year period for a contract, with a 2 year renewal possible, pending performance review.

Member Allred seconded. The motion carried.

Member Allred noted for the record that we should pursue some compromise as to how schools will be judged, assessed, and rated under the new assessment. In the past, there has been a baseline year

before scores count for or against a school. I would like to see some options as to how that will be done when the testing moves forward.

MOTION: Member Laden moved to recommend the SBE prescribe the continued administration of the Criterion Referenced Test in science. Assemblyman Bobzien seconded. The motion carried.

Deputy Superintendent's Update on Department Activities

Deputy Canavero stated the NDE conducted a professional development analysis and instituted a common core implementation taskforce study. This survey of the districts gave the NDE an idea of the status of the implementation process. What the survey showed was a majority of districts are in some stage of implementation. Additionally, the NDE had an external review of its process which used a rubric to assess good implementation. We have our scores and we have a lot of work ahead of us in terms of ensuring these standards are aligned. Our testing capacity review is almost complete, and we are reaching the final steps of our department restructure which will be included as part of the State Improvement Plan.

Progress report on the development of the End of Course (EOC) examinations to be administered during the 2014/15 school year

Director Sharp provided an update on the development of the EOC examinations. To date, we have completed our test design, which means we have developed a test blueprint. The test blueprint tells us what standards will be assessed, how many items will be assessed for each standard, and the knowledge level required. In addition, the item specifications and the passage specifications for ELA reading are complete. WestEd has been developing the assessment items and continues to do so at this time. In November 2014, the NDE will institute an item review process and invite educators to conduct a review of test passages to determine if they contain any bias. After the bias review, there will be a content review to determine whether an item aligns with the standard. These are the first steps in building validity and reliability in a test. December 2014 through January 2015, WestEd and the NDE will conduct a final review of the assessments. This review will ensure all item and passage specifications fit into the established blueprint. We are on track to be able to administer these assessments in April 2015 for ELA I and II, as well as math I and II.

Members discussed the mechanisms in place for adjustments should the NDE find items which do not have the necessary alignment. Director Sharp stated the NDE and the vendor will conduct an item analysis and will be able to pull out items that do not perform well. Every year the EOCs are given we will continue to field test items which will allow us to refresh the question pool. Relative to the first set of test results, Director Sharp stated the first administration of the EOC examinations will occur in April 2015. By July 2015 a new contract will be in place and we will be able to do scoring and reporting at that time. Unfortunately, there was not enough money to score, report, and standard set at the same time, so we will score and report under the new contract. The actual reporting will not occur until after August 2015.

Presentation and discussion about proposed revisions to, and possible approval of, the Nevada Science Standards

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/September/Nevada's Transition from NGSS to the NVACS for Science - 2014/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/September/Nevada's_Transition_from_NGSS_to_the_NVACS_for_Science_-_2014/)

Andre DeLeon, EPP, K-12 Health, Science, and World Language, presented the recommended changes in language for the transition from the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which were previously adopted, to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for science. Mr. DeLeon explained that the text written in red (see above-referenced link) was an example of how to teach the standard and was not a portion of the standard itself. The information stated in red shows teachers a way to teach a standard, but it is not the only way. Dr. Canavero added that as part of the codification process, after the recommended changes are adopted by the SBE, the regulation goes to the Legislative Counsel Bureau for drafting. After drafting is completed, the regulation goes to the Legislative Commission for final approval. It was at this point the regulation was sent back to the NDE because none of the other education standards in the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) contain specific examples.

Members discussed the pervasiveness of the examples throughout the science standards. Rather than selectively remove some examples and leave others, it was decided to remove all of the examples from NAC. However, NDE staff repeatedly emphasized the examples would remain in the instructional materials available to teachers. Teachers look to the NDE and their district websites for standards and instructional materials, not NAC. They will still have access to the examples as a resource for instruction, but the examples will not be codified in NAC. NAC will contain just the standard itself, which is consistent with all other NDE standards.

Assemblyman Bobzien queried whether the standards would be weakened by removing the examples. Dr. Canavero responded that the examples were not appropriate for regulation and were not included in our other standards. We feel that the adoption of standards and regulations is the role of the NDE, but providing examples and other instructional materials is the role of districts through their curriculum and instructional development.

Chair Carvalho questioned whether any concern about the regulation had been expressed from outside of the NDE. Dr. Canavero stated that no outside concerns had been expressed. This issue came to the NDE through the LCB.

Member Allred departed meeting at 2:25p.m.

Discussion of the current Nevada health standards; the process for revising the current health standards; and when the current standards are scheduled for review

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/September/Nevada's State Standards Adoption Process \(1\)/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Council_to_Establish_Academic_Standards/Agendas/2014/September/Nevada's_State_Standards_Adoption_Process_(1)/)

Andre DeLeon, EPP, K-12 Health, Science, and World Language, stated the health standards were last revised in summer 2007 and are scheduled to be reviewed this school year. All academic content standards are on a 7-8 years cycle for review and revision. During this process, the NDE will pull together teachers in the field, as well as other stakeholders, to decide whether to keep the standards as they are, completely revise the standards, or selectively revise the standards.

Members and NDE staff discussed the stakeholder selection process. Director Sharp explained that the NDE invites stakeholders from the previous standard setting group, and then reaches out to the districts and to the education community for new groups. There are other standards in the queue before health; primarily fine arts, and library literacy. We begin the standard review process by coming first to this Council and stating that we believe it is time for a set of standards to be reviewed and we ask for your agreement. If the Council agrees, we would then put the review process into motion.

In regard to a health standard review, Assemblyman Bobzien stated I would defer to staff at this time. I see no value in initiating Council direction to the staff at this time. I appreciate staff looking at this and we will let the health standards come forward during their natural cycle. I look forward to hearing updates at our next meeting.

Future meeting and agenda items

Members discussed the possibility of setting up quarterly meetings in April, July, and October. Deputy Canavero requested a meeting in November or very early December to look at standards of performance for the SBAC assessments. The Council's recommendation could then move forward to SBE shortly thereafter to put the process into motion for our assessments.

Additional council member comments

Member Laden stated that northern Nevada, and indeed the entire state of Nevada, was losing a great champion of education. Ann Loring, who spent 8 years on the Washoe County School Board and served as a lobbyist for Washoe County schools, is moving out of our state this week. It is a huge loss for the state and I have not met anyone more informed about education, outside of educators, than Ann. She was a mentor to many in Washoe County and throughout the state and I offer my personal thanks and wish the best to Ann and her family as they move on.

Member Beatty stated she would also commend Ann Lohring. She has been a wealth of information to this Council and to people throughout the state. I am so sad she is leaving our community. It looks like we in education are in a serious stage of transition. I would like to suggest we get a public relations representative to handle some of the things we are going to face in the next year or so.

Public comment #2

There was no public comment.

Meeting adjournment

MOTION: Assemblyman Bobzien moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Laden seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.